

SOCIAL STUDIES DILEMMA

by

S. HERBERT SHAWVER III

B. S., Kansas State University, 1962

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A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1968

Approved by:

*Herbert E. Kaus*  
Major Professor

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation to his previous major adviser, Dr. Harwood P. Hinton of the University of Arizona, and to his present major adviser, Dr. Herbert Kaiser, for their assistance in the preparation of this report.

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY: A BEGINNING

### Background

Dr. George W. Denemark, Dean, School of Education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has stated, "The job of today's teacher has become virtually unmanageable". It is his thesis that America's youth are being deprived of the quality education, which they so desperately need in today's age of science and rapidly advancing technology, because of outmoded teaching techniques.

In the past five years social studies has drawn ever growing criticism from such eminent educators as Carr<sup>1</sup> and Fraser,<sup>2</sup> many classroom instructors and far too many students. Their consensus is that social studies are becoming a meaningless aspect of today's curriculum because of the increasing sophistication level and general knowledge of the students. During this same period, however, the average instructor has not only improved his level of education but on the whole is a more dynamic professional dedicated to changes in pedagogy.

The social studies, despite the infusion of young blood, are beset with major internal difficulties. This is in addition to the unreasonable para-subject expectations which further complicates any ultimate solution.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin R. Carr, "The Social Studies", 1.

<sup>2</sup>Dorothy M. Fraser, "What's Happening in the Social Studies," Curriculum Report (Curriculum Service Center/NASSP), 3:2, March, 1965.

<sup>3</sup>George W. Denemark, "The Teacher and His Staff," NEA Journal, 55:17, December, 1966.

### Purpose of the study

The purpose of this paper is to overview the emergence of social studies as a subject and then to outline the present status of social studies. The paper concludes with speculation as to the future of social studies per se, as problems and difficulties felt to be especially important are advanced.

A study such as this is by its very nature an on-going process, and the writer never intended to imply here that all has been either presented or considered. The presentation was based on an extensive survey of social studies' literature along with research and personal observations from a pedagogy viewpoint since 1960.

Undoubtedly, the question of what to teach is as important and old as the human race. The transmission of social learnings from one generation to the next has been the concern of cultures from the beginning of their existence. Plato even discussed the essence of this question in *THE REPUBLIC*. More recently the 19th century American philosopher, Herbert Spencer, considered it in his essay entitled, "What Knowledge is of Most Worth."<sup>1</sup>

In primitive cultures teaching is sporadic: It comes about primarily when a custom is not clear or when a custom misfires or miscarries. In more advanced and complex cultures such as ours, 'teaching' of necessity becomes continuous and more complex because the state of change makes customs alone an inadequate substitute in how one ought to respond to the cultural environment.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Spencer, "What Knowledge is of Most Worth", The Principals Look at the Schools: A Status Study of Selected Instructional Practices, 1.

Change the cultural environment and you change the culture.

Under such a condition whatever the method of education, transmission of the culture is only partial. On the other hand, in a homogeneous society which is faced by no new circumstances drastic enough to disturb balance, transmission of its culture occurs generation after generation regardless of how it may break the rules of education that the culture deems so essential.<sup>1</sup>

In our own society the problem of culture transmission is complicated by the rapidity of social change. No method of education can prevent this. The theme of our society is change, with science and technology derived from this theme as the primary agents of this phenomenon.

What is the school's response? There appears to be a marked tendency to teach subject materials and concepts which the younger person can no longer use profitably in the world in which he must become a part. On the other hand, there has been some belated effort to equip students for the world. It should be understood that the school alone is incapable of stabilizing an unstable world: it must necessarily inculcate its charges. Thus, as one reviews social studies in American schools the educational dilemma which exists becomes only too clear.

In the early days of our American educational development, it was decided on the basis of a priori reasoning that for the purpose of research, education and administration the field of knowledge should be classified into large divisions. Social studies was one major division. Its subdivisions are now known as subjects such as history, economics, sociology and so on.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin Fenton, Teaching the New Social Studies in Secondary Schools, 65.

<sup>2</sup>Rolla M. Tryson, The Social Sciences as School Subjects, 526.

The question arises, what is social studies and its major sub-division history? What is the basic historical development of history as a subject? What is its relationship to the other social studies' subjects? What is our present program, objectives and purposes? What curriculum changes, trends and research are there in history and social studies? What problems appear to challenge the position of history as a major division of social studies?

Many committees and commissions of professional education societies, history associations and scholars have focused attention on the study of history at various times during our country's growth. This report will focus attention on the social studies and its major division, history. The critical nature of the times may be injected by the reader.

Men are anxious to control the educative process. Thus, they hypothesize how the outcome they envision for their young people can best be secured.<sup>1</sup> Only with a passage of time can a refinement of thinking and a precision of thought with respect to educational process develop. Only with such precision of thought can education cease to be a mechanical convention.

#### Definition of Social Studies and History

Carter V. Good defines social studies as, "Portions of the subject matter of the social sciences, particularly history, economics, political science, sociology and geography...in which both the subject matter and aims are predominately social..."<sup>2</sup> Thus, they are "School

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<sup>1</sup>Harry S. Broudy and John R. Palmer, Templars of Teaching Method, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education, 395.

subjects concerned with human relationships...dependent upon social science for direction and content."<sup>1</sup> The nature of the term itself, Social Studies, indicates materials whose content, as well as its aim, is predominately social. It is the social sciences simplified for pedagogical purposes.<sup>2</sup> More specifically the phrase social studies is used to designate history, government, sociology, economics, geography and social problems.

It is history as a subject and a "purpose" with which this report will be primarily concerned although it can never be fully divorced from the social studies. What is thus brought out in this survey is true throughout the social studies. Most teachers, laymen, and historians feel that the prime purpose of history as a humanity, is to extend the memory of the rising generation so they will understand how man in the past acted and reacted. This, also, is the objective overtly of the other major divisions of social studies.

The word "history" itself, is an ambiguous word and makes dealing with it even more difficult. W. W. Walsh in his Philosophy of History emphasized the following point. In essence, he said, "History is the totality of past human actions and the narrative or account that we construct of them." Bragdon and McCutchen,<sup>3</sup> Clark,<sup>4</sup> along with Commanger and Nevins<sup>5</sup> strongly concurred.

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy McClure Fraser and Samuel P. McCutchen, Eds., Social Studies in Transition: Guidelines for Change, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar Bruce Wesley, "Let's Abolish History Courses," Phi Delta Kappan, 59:3-8, September, 1967, 3.

<sup>3</sup>Henry W. Bragdon and Samuel P. McCutchen, History of a Free People, xiii.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas D. Clark, The Story of the Westward Movement, v and vi.

<sup>5</sup>Henry Steele and Allen Nevins, (Eds.), The Heritage of America, vii-ix.

Therefore, History is an aggregate by its nature rather than an entity. It is plainly an assemblage rather than an element. The study of the educational phenomena of history is as difficult an undertaking as the complexities of the subject itself. A consideration of the development of the subject, therefore is in order.

#### THE SOCIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY: PRESENT STATUS

##### Foundations of History

Each generation has its own particular idea about social studies and the subject of history. In 1784, Jedidiah Morse included an account of the "United States after the Revolution" written by Noah Webster in Elements of Geography. Thus, between 1784 and 1830, wherever geography was taught in elementary schools there was likely to be some history taught also, as this was the most widely distributed geography of that time.<sup>1</sup> Even if there were no geography, history was found to some extent in connection with reading such as the Bible and the classics.

During the period from approximately 1830 to 1860, history was given an autonomous place in the elementary program of studies.<sup>2</sup> Actually, the trend had started earlier in private schools, academies and the first high schools. The history texts were brief and chronologically organized and emphasized political and military aspects of national development with a heavy overtone of geography.

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<sup>1</sup>Tryson, 101.

<sup>2</sup>Tryson, 100.



Examination of literature on the evolution of curricula in the public schools leaves the impression, that there was a relapse in interest in history, as a subject of study, from 1860 through 1870. This was probably due to two factors: First, the Civil War demanded public and private attention. Secondly, immediately after the war the nation was caught up in the movement into the "final west" and thus, people were preoccupied with the building of personal and corporate financial successes.

From 1870 to 1900, the subject of history once again received considerable attention. The newly developing high school included history as a separate subject and a basic requirement for a "good general education." All the private schools, academies and elementary schools by this time included the subject with the exception of emerging schools located in the frontier region where the curricular emphasis was only the most rudimentary knowledge considered to be "figurin', writin' and readin'."

After the Civil War a popular notion developed in the East that history was a good disciplinarian and had "moral value."<sup>1</sup> This emphasis was further developed between 1900 and 1920. Educators came to believe and praise history as holding such values as, "the discipline," "the auxiliary," "the moral," "the patriotic," "the cultural," and also offered the opportunity for satisfactory use of a student's leisure time and better citizenship. There were also the years of G. Stanley Hall and the Herbartian emphasis of the "moral" qualities of history.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tryson, 80.

<sup>2</sup>Tryson, 80.

History, for the most part during this period, consisted merely of an orderly chronological detailing of the deeds and exploits of political and military leaders guiding the fortunes of nations and empires. It became the task of the student to consume the facts and conclude the scheme of things.

Meanwhile various commissions and committees attempted to define history and social studies, as well as to provide a philosophy and set up objectives. This was to give some purposeful direction to the teaching of history. Playing key roles were the American Historical Association and leading historians, such as Charles Beard. The results of noted historians and various commissions will be elaborated on later. The sum total of their efforts was to "recommend a social studies curriculum which could be followed by a majority of school systems."

For all practical purposes the efforts of the procession of formal commissions came to a close in 1929. The main research conclusion in this area was by the National Council for the Social Studies, which met at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and formulated the basic proposals which today dominate the social studies curriculum and the pattern of history courses. The Council was and is an affiliate of the American Historical Association.

#### The Social Studies Program and the Subject of History Today

It is possible, as well as highly desirable, to secure a general picture of both range and module offerings for each of the upper grades by examining the latest surveys, curriculum guides and courses of study.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Bruce Wesley and Stanley P. Wronski, Teaching Social Studies in High Schools, 1941.

A recent and inclusive survey was conducted by Anderson of the Educational Testing Service. This survey was designed to find out what is being taught in the social studies area to American students in grades seven through twelve. She also included the organization and requirement of the courses in the survey. It was found that the social studies was dominated by history and that American history was the most often taught form of history. American history was offered in 93 per cent of the high schools while 85 per cent offered world history. The next largest offering in the social studies was American history at grades equivalent of junior high. Civics and American government ranked 62 per cent and 58 per cent respectively, from grades through twelve. It was concluded that American and world history dominated the social studies in public, Catholic and independent schools.<sup>1</sup>

Moreland and Jones as well as the North Central Association confirmed the Anderson study. More explicitly, their findings according to grade level were civics at grade 9, world history at grade 10, American history at grade 11, and some kind of government and some kind of a problems arrangement in grade 12.<sup>2</sup> Selakovich, Wesley and Wronski all substantiate these studies.

A listing of social studies offerings, as a composite from these studies, is provided here. We have in essence, therefore, the results of aforementioned commissions and committees; a person immediately recognizes this as an interesting exercise in semantics.

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<sup>1</sup>Scarvia B. Anderson, et. al., Social Studies in Secondary Schools: A Survey of Courses and Practices, 7.

<sup>2</sup>Fenton, 19.

Grade 7. Geography

Also: history - United States, world, Eastern hemisphere, state; also: civics, citizenship, community life, conservation, world backgrounds, social studies, history and geography.

Grade 8. United States History

Also: geography; history - world, latin American, Western hemisphere, state; also, civics, citizenship, social studies, history and geography.

Grade 9. Civics (Citizenship)

Also: history - ancient, world, Eastern hemisphere, latin America, state; also, geography - global, air age, world, commercial; also problems - social, personal, community; also, life adjustment, social living, orientation, occupations, consumer education, economic education, business training, human relations, western civilization, conservation, and social studies.

Grade 10. World History

Also history - ancient, medieval, modern, Western hemisphere, far Eastern, latin American, Asiatic, European, United States; also, geography - world, economic, global, air age; also, world affairs, occupations, consumer education, social living, social problems, psychology, sociology, history, and geography.

Grade 11. United States History

Also history - modern European, modern, contemporary, Latin American; also, geography - economic, commercial, air age; also, world affairs, contemporary affairs, occupations, consumer education, psychology, international relations, human relations, economics, sociology, civics, problems of democracy.

Grade 12. Problems of Democracy or United States Government

Also, history - United States, modern, world, state; also current events, world affairs, international relations, inter-American relations; also, orientation, occupations, personality, human relations, social problems, group guidance, commercial law, salesmanship, consumer education, economic education, sociology, civics and government.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John H. Haefner, "Proposals for a Social Studies Curriculum," Social Education, 24:200-204, May, 1960, 201.

This pattern is essentially the same as outlined by the committee on Social Studies of the National Education Association's Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education of 1916.<sup>1</sup> Most schools' programs differ from the above programs only in assorted particulars.

### Objectives of Social Studies and History

Society at large envisions the social studies and history as the panacea for patriotism and social ills. This is manifest by the legislative requirements<sup>2</sup> and the tendency to include American history and government as requirements for graduation as determined by the local education boards.<sup>3</sup>

The social studies and history are, to the thinking of most people, simply to teach civic virtue known vicariously as loyalty, national fervor, civic responsibility and patriotism. A less popular view, but nonetheless a growing one, is the view that social studies are for social education. Beginning in the 1920's this view has gradually begun to dominate the thinking of the educators themselves. In itself, social education is so diverse that it must be more specifically spelled out. The actual achievement of this is the product of the instructor delving into the philosophical underpinnings of educational goals (those of the school he is in, as well as his own with respect to his own speciality). He must achieve an understanding of the entire social system as it affects behavior in the class and

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<sup>1</sup>Howard Cummings, "Part One: The Social Studies in the Secondary School Today," Social Studies in the Senior High School (ed. Willis D. Moreland), 4-5.

<sup>2</sup>Carr, 26.

<sup>3</sup>Interview Claude Spencer, Kansas State Department of Education, Social Studies Consultant.

school. The individualized approach shatters any desirable overall homogeneity of approach, and objectives. Although there are other objectives of social studies and history, these appear to dominate the vast majority of those engaged in the teaching profession.

A few in the field consider these as a major weakness and have made them the basis for protests. This growing concern may be indicative of the long awaited change. One might even hypothesize from reading the vast material assembled that the present situation in social studies and history is in a period with an upcoming change imperative. Proponents of a new social studies led by Edwin Fenton and Dorothy Fraser have set forth a cluster of three objectives. They are:

(1) Knowledge: The ability to recall or recognize ideas or phenomena that a student has experienced in the same form or in a similar form at an earlier time.

(2) Abilities and Skills: The ability to find appropriate information and techniques in a student's experience to help him solve new problems or cope with new experiences. In social studies the mode of inquiry of historians and social scientists are an important part of these abilities and skills.

(3) Affective Objectives: The development of attitudes, understanding and value that will promote a democratic way of life and assist each student in developing a personal philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin Fenton, Teaching the New Social Studies in Secondary Schools, 65.

Since this trend is a relatively new idea, it might be appropriate to note that it is only causally translated into a meaningful program for the lay instructor. It appears to be the popular concept that such is the instructor's responsibility. Thus, many new instructors are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task and apply these as general objectives suitable to their unique class from an enormous flood of textual materials and supplementary literature from the publishing experts.

### Grade Placement of Subject Matter

Of the authors examined none have made extensive mention of grade placement for the subject matter except Haefner. It appears that grade placement of subject matter in social studies and history is based almost wholly upon a priori reasoning with little empirical evidence to substantiate what has been done. There is no student of social studies who has published exclusively dealing with grade placement. Grade placement of subject matter still remains another vulnerable weakness and failing of the social studies and history.

### Method

Method, by definition, is the systematic orderly way by which each instructor approaches his instruction.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of the definition used, one problem continues to persist and that is the use of the term with respect to normal learning activities. There is no relationship

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<sup>1</sup>Frank Steeves, Fundamentals of Teaching in Secondary Schools,  
19.

here; that is to day, learning activities are not methods of teaching. Should an instructor use a workbook in class then by our definition the work book use is not the "work book method." Another example is the use of a case study. This is not the "case method." The method includes the actual approaches to instruction including the work book and case study through to evaluation. The mistake, assuming considerable changes in social studies methods has occurred, is understandable when surveying the vast amount of material on social studies and history teaching.

Well worn terms such as "core," "integration," "the meaningful approach," "interdisciplinary," "problems approach," "critical thinking," and "social concepts," all have to do with some aspect of the same basic method of teaching.<sup>1</sup> Study of methods reveals that the method is often either simple and mechanical, reflecting little or no imagination, or, even worse, fixed and narrow. A great number of authors of books and periodicals brought up this issue. None had an answer. The most recent volume (1967) on the subject entitled, Promising Practices, sponsored by the National Council for the Social Studies failed to provide any remedy for the simple and mechanical methods being used. It merely stated, quite honestly, that, "the reader should not expect to find many drastic innovations reported." There were none. It further stated that some of the methods reported, utilizing group discussion for example, are excellent uses of methods as old as

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<sup>1</sup>J. Wade Caruthers, "Social Education Looks at the History Curriculum: An Eleven-Year View," Social Education, 31:93-98, February, 1967, 93.



education and well known to most teachers. Others, it goes on to say, ...if not completely unique, have a freshness or originality of approach that tempts one to think of them as innovations."<sup>1</sup> It appears that in the past efforts have been maligned resulting in merely a realignment or reinterpretation of standard methods.

Present literature emphasizes that current secondary-school methods continue to center around some form of an integrated unit plan for teaching. The unit is the most common designation for the meaningful subdivision within a course. The method of teaching for each unit is essentially the same too often being merely rote memory of quantified facts. "Variety," "child-centered," "problem solving," "teacher-pupil planning," and so on, almost always mean quantification and evaluation based on retention of minute bits of information.

Here then is an overview and the problem. It is interesting to try to apply what has been considered a good composite criteria developed by Alcorn for evaluating teaching methods.

Good instructional materials have appropriateness related to curriculum and units of study...daily lessons are suitable for particular age or grade level, free from bias, prejudice, distortion, anti-social attitudes and untruthfulness...recency that is, up to date, reflecting current thought original or revised...availability, that is, materials and plans are readily available when needed... appeal, attention holding and esthetic...the cost is within school budget limitations...<sup>2</sup>

Considerable evidence can be evaluated to conclude that there is an awkward, unresolved ambivalence in the social studies method.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald W. Robinson, Harold E. Oyer, Elmer F. Pffieger and Daniel Rosella, Promising Practices in Civic Education, XIV.

<sup>2</sup>Marvin D. Alcorn, James S. Kinder, and Jim R. Schunert, Better Teaching in Secondary Schools, 204.

A gap exists between what ought to be and how to achieve it, and between what is and how it is achieved.<sup>1</sup>

In one study it was found that students disliked and resisted American history for eleven reasons ranging from overlap, stigmatized courses (that is, they were required), lack of individual assignments, categorical quantification of names, dates, wars and so on, facts taught as prime ends in themselves, ill-prepared and uninterested teachers, teacher personality and lack of integration of courses on the same level.<sup>2</sup> Note that the complaints directly or indirectly involved method in nearly all cases.

Due to the technological emphasis of our age the individual has been released from the traditional folkways and mores of the community centered geographical areas. This focalization has given way to the metropolitan area with need of the "good citizen." Therefore, we have a new kind of student who must learn ways of finding out facts, ideas and values. He must develop the ability to know where to find information, how to evaluate it, and how to communicate his findings to others.

A survey of the publishing of Wesley, Fraser, Carr, Robinson and others suggests that methods must be appropriate to attain these goals:

(1) To impart knowledge and skills to assist in solving the problems of our times;

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<sup>1</sup>Peter A. Soderbergh, "Charles A. Beard and the Commission on the Social Studies 1929-1933: A Reappraisal," Social Education, 31:465-468, October, 1967, 468.

<sup>2</sup>Richard E. Gross and William V. Badger, "Social Studies," Chester W. Harris, Ed., Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Third Edition, 1301.

(2) To create awareness of the effects of science on civilization and its use to improve the quality of life;

(3) To bring about readiness for effective economic life;

(4) To develop the ability to make value judgments for effective life in a changing world;

(5) To bring recognition that we live in an open ended world, which requires receptivity to new facts, new ideas and new ways of life;

(6) To bring about participation in the process of decision making through expression of views to representatives, experts and specialists;

(7) To bring about belief in both liberty of the individual and equality for all;

(8) To achieve pride in the achievements of the United States, appreciation of the contribution of other people, and support for international peace and cooperation;

(9) To use the creative arts to sensitize oneself to universal human experience and to the uniqueness of the individual;

(10) To achieve awareness of compassion and sensitivity for the needs, feelings, and aspirations of other human beings.<sup>1</sup>

These should be the results of methods used. This should not, however, be construed to imply that content does not play an important role in bringing about an attainment of these goals. Naturally, no single method can do all; some manage to accomplish several of these by their nature, however.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald W. Robinson, Harold E. Oyer, Elmer F. Pffieger and Daniel Rosella, 16-17.

### Some Suggested Methods

The problems approach has been defined and discussed for the past several decades. There is little in the literature of social studies education, outside of theory, definitions and discussions, which actually provide guidelines for implementation of this method.<sup>1</sup>

All authors who discuss the problem approach agree that the theory has enormous appeal. There is, however, one major limitation in that the problems approach may attempt too much. The technique is basically:

1. Define the problem
2. Develop hypotheses on the problem
3. Collect and analyze data
4. Draw conclusions and apply them<sup>2</sup>

If one uses this method he undoubtedly accepts that there is a close relationship between content and method. He accepts the application of principles of learning to the teaching of social studies. Finally, he understands the interdisciplinary nature of social studies.

A few instructors, apparently accepting the problem approach, have taken the approach as a method to its logical ultimate. They seek to abandon content courses altogether and substitute "sources." Teachers would become directors of research while students become producers as well as consumers of history.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Selakovich, Problems in Secondary Social Studies, 1965, v.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., vi.

<sup>3</sup>Wesley, 3.

Much of today's social studies education is conducted by use of curriculum guides.<sup>1</sup> This gives specific directions addressed to the teachers of school children indicating the subject-matter area from which desirable educational experiences may be drawn as well as logical sequence of topics in each topical area likely to be found successful in reaching desirable educational goals. One can see the immediate natural relationship the problem approach has to the already existing educational framework of the guide. One immediate problem presents itself concerning the considerable preparational time that is needed.

The "spiral, cycle or concentric approach" has enjoyed considerable popularity. In its practical application, the approach (method) means the teaching of the same general body of material at different levels of instruction, adapting it, at different levels, to the interest capacities and psychological development for whom it is intended.<sup>2</sup> Again, the main drawback is the amount of preparational time required on the part of the instructor which is something the modern school has failed to provide.

Today's most used and overused method can be considered the topical unit approach tied to an overall biographical data frame work.<sup>3</sup> Most instructors being pressed for time and others affiliated with the

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<sup>1</sup>Carr, 19.

<sup>2</sup>Tryson, 26.

<sup>3</sup>Carr, 18.

modern educational structure consider this approach as a natural mode of approach to historical study. The lives of great men, of heroes and leaders, make concrete and vital historic episodes otherwise abstract and incomprehensible. Thus, they serve to condense into vivid pictures complicated and tangled series of events spread over so much space and time that only a highly trained mind can follow and unravel them. Can the ghetto dweller's youth care about these heroes? Isn't the colorful and very much alive H. Rap Brown much more likely to be communicating and responding to their needs than the hero or old maid Miss School Teacher at PS378?

It can be concluded that organizing the social sciences, as illustrations here suggested for teaching purposes, has not passed entirely out of the hypothetical stage. A study of the field of social studies teaching will reveal the tendency of those involved to give old things new names.<sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking, since the advent of space exploration in 1957 there has been little significant consideration given to the kind of methods which should be utilized with regard to the academically talented.<sup>2</sup> The question, of course, is if they should have a different method from that offered to other pupils. Oddly enough pedagogical literature is vague regarding this. Some authors give indication they are considering differentiated methods but as yet too little has been done and no conclusive report made. This is a very real problem. As science continues

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<sup>1</sup>Carr, 22.

<sup>2</sup>Carr, chapter 1.

to be the emphasis of our generation, students enter the social studies course more analytical than ever. This challenges the modern instructor to shake off traditional approaches and methods and innovate at the risk of tradition.

The literature available on differentiated methods for the gifted concurs in the description of the teacher as able to:

1. Accept and respect talented students.
2. Provide balanced recognitions of a students' special strengths, potentialities, problems, and limitations.
3. Help students face the reality problems they have or may encounter as a result of their outstanding ability.
4. Present a rich and varied background of learning and experience.
5. Stimulate a "love of learning."
6. Help his students recognize the interdependence of flexibility of thinking and careful organization and help them to set rigorous standards by which to judge their ideas and their work.<sup>1</sup>

The time involvement relative to preparation of suitable material and method for the able student becomes a key problem of critical proportion. Why social studies and the pedagogical methods involved must change becomes clear.

#### THE SOCIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY: THE FUTURE

##### Curriculum Revision

A curriculum is the sum total of all experiences which students undergo in the educational process.<sup>2</sup> The curriculum should be the

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth Wood Gavian, (Ed), The Social Education of the Academically Talented, 11.

<sup>2</sup>Blanche McDonald and Leslie Nelson, Methods That Teach, 2.

result of careful study by instructors, staff, various community leaders and interested parents and should reflect the community ideals and goals. A curriculum study should ascertain:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?<sup>1</sup>

Curriculum revision is inevitable in a society which is technologically orientated. The overall community and its involvement is, of course, a determinant of the frequency of revision. Nevertheless, educators need to be aware of their role in implementing the process continually under the conclusions of frequent reevaluation lest the community becomes complacent and stagnates. Revision would thus become a somewhat of stimulator to innovation in method.

### Trends

Prior to 1860 curriculum development centered upon the premise that history:

- (1) Provides valuable training in morals;
- (2) Furnishes abundant opportunity for the profitable use of leisure time;
- (3) Is a great inspirer of patriotism;

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph W. Tyler, "New Dimensions in Curriculum Development," Phi Delta Kappan, 55:25-28, September, 1966, 25.



- (4) Trains for a higher order of citizenship;
- (5) Affords occasions for religious training;
- (6) Strengthens and disciplines the minds of those who master its content.<sup>1</sup>

Today these values are of little use in themselves or social change renders them useless, if we insist on using the memoriter approach. For example, how efficient would history be in training for morals if one can not communicate the tangibility of historical figures to a socially and economically deprived ghetto dweller? The other values appear equally disturbing when they are examined more closely under present realistic conditions. Each in some instance may be used as a focus for curriculum revision, but in themselves they remain the sole focal points of accepted verities, which is a wholly unrealistic view.

Reexamination of the literature in curriculum and methodology reveals very significant disagreement between various writers on three basic issues. The first issue is the relationship between social science and history; the second, the curriculum goals - presentation versus the structure of the discipline; and third, methodology - induction versus deduction or memoriter versus heuristics. Such disagreement certainly causes considerable confusion but, more importantly, is indicative of the unique individualism of social studies. This confusion drives many a novice teacher to find refuge in the traditional textbook procedure of read, recite and testing with its resulting arbitrary rote learning.

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<sup>1</sup>Tryson, 77.

Actually the absence of any national system of schools in the legal sense makes it impossible for any agency to obtain full and reliable reports from the whole country with respect to the educational picture.<sup>1</sup> The infusion of federal funds and guidelines in addition to the federal developments and regional information centers appear to be making this less true. Thus, a vague and somewhat distorted picture of educational developments can be ascertained.

Three significant studies dealing with trends which overcame the handicap, (centered in the social studies curriculum) have recently been completed. Various authors mentioned Moreland, Jones and the Foreign Relations Project of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

The North Central Association findings confirmed the results of Jones and Moreland. Their basic purpose was to ascertain what definite trend was occurring in the social studies. The conclusion was, unfortunately, merely new offerings. In this case, it was the international relations area. Wesley was quick to state that he felt the increase in international relations courses, although not large quantitatively, represented a significant straw in the wind.<sup>2</sup> The new offering represented merely curriculum enlargement.

Any curriculum study should consider this problem of enlargement. Many of these do not wholly lie within the social studies field although they have aspects which relate. Such courses are personal conduct, guidance, economic education, comparative government, reflective thinking and decision making, community resources, intergroup relations,

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<sup>1</sup>Wesley and Wronski, 141.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 145.

resources and development, planning area studies, United Nations, contemporary affairs, and basic values. J. Wade Caruthers<sup>1</sup> indicates these lie outside the proper realm of history and the social studies.

Another major difficulty in reporting on social studies is that social studies have been moribund. However, presently one will find more than forty social studies curriculum projects underway, variously financed by all levels of government, by foundations, colleges or combinations of these agencies. Of special interest, is the Cooperative Research Program which consists of seven curriculum centers, eleven research projects and two developmental activities. Results of this program will become available later in 1968. In addition, a much stronger emphasis upon educational research has developed in the education graduate schools since the beginning of the 1960's. Until these studies are completed and results known one can only conjecture with a few general remarks.

One trend occurring in the social studies curriculum is the breaking away from the traditional dominance of history, geography and civics. More economics, anthropology, sociology, social psychology and political science are being offered.<sup>2</sup>

A second notable general trend in the social studies curriculum is the introduction, or greatly expanded treatment, of what is sometimes called international education. This was mentioned on page 24.

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<sup>1</sup>Caruthers, 107.

<sup>2</sup>Dorothy M. Fraser, "The 'New' Social Studies," NEA Journal, 56:24-26, November, 1967, 24.

A third innovative trend is the study of how various disciplines acquire data. Illustrative of this is the "workways" of the social sciences, that is, the historical method, sampling techniques, survey procedures, or the geographer's use of basic maps giving specific data for combining into a single map of general data.

A concomitant effect of this latter innovation has been the reawakened interest and use of the inductive approach. The emphasis of inquiry and discovery of problems has the unique inductive aspect.<sup>1</sup>

Today, for example, federal and state monies and programs have produced an avalanche of new aids and equipment. There is little doubt as to their enormous value. The problem is that traditionally an instructor's time must be allocated and thus he is too busy to develop the application of these aids and equipment; therefore, they sit in A-V centers and only occasionally make their appearance in the classroom.<sup>2</sup>

Future trends not only depend on results of present conditions and research but also that the individual instructor be given a degree of freedom to make, revise, and alter the contents of his courses and to choose suitable activities through which students can experience the curriculum. If school systems can be made to recognize the individual instructor's opportunity, plus the fact that the instructor is on the whole, young, interested and much better educated than in times past, they would provide the time for necessary work in curriculum and study of social studies trends and thereby, greatly accelerate the process of change. Thus research, both on the part of the organized discipline and the individual instructor, appears more imperative than ever.

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<sup>1</sup>Fraser, 26.

<sup>2</sup>Private survey conducted at Kansas State Teachers meeting at Wichita, 1966 and 1967. Also Keith B. Mueller, Superintendent of Schools, made this point after extensive examination of the situation in 1967.

Research: A Key?

In the summer and fall of 1943, an identic committee appointed by the National Council for the Social Studies, the American Historical Association and the Mississippi Valley Historical Association wrote a report which became the basis for our present American History program. The report contained the most specific lists of minimum content ever recommended by a national committee. It listed the persons, dates, events, and skills that should be taught in the middle grades, in Junior high school, and in Senior high school. These were considered as social, not as psychological or pedagogical minimums. The point is that the year 1943, despite the war, presented a far different picture of needs than the present twenty five years later. Thus, we need to take stock of the present offerings and plan for our time and future.

Morland surveyed the offerings in 281 schools in the United States selected at random from the directory of schools in Patterson's American Education.<sup>1</sup> The result of his report was to provide textbook writers and instructors with some idea of what present content consisted of. His influence was considerable according to various educators.

A way out of the labyrinth of the social studies dilemma may be found by researching various student needs. Social studies' instructors might launch a research program aimed at determining the relative values of collateral reading for the ghetto dweller, the rural oriented youngster as well as for the upper middle class suburban youngster. The same might be applied to materials being used currently, critical evaluation of books,

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<sup>1</sup>Wesley and Wronski, 143.

magazines and other publications, dramatization, debates, forums and panel discussions and their merit relative to these three groups. In addition, studies need to be conducted on the merit of writing biographical sketches, the use of visual aids, selection or preparation of records, tapes, special notebooks, scrapbooks, collections, correlation with art and literature, leisure time reading lists, stimulation experiences, excursions, field trips, student government and work with community services or welfare organizations.

If such a study were made, the method most successful for use with these three distinct groups would thereby be identifiable. An intensive formulation of objectives and a variety of suggested methods could be carried out on control groups within these distinct areas of American society. By such research a pattern of methods would emerge relative to objectives desired which would have empirical validity. The materials which until now have had only assumed values would have known values.

An unusually rapid adoption of new practices, methods, materials and techniques should take place as a result. In addition increased federal support for education will play a significant role in the process.<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is more dependent upon the federal guidelines adopted relative to the programs. These guidelines bear careful watching.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald W. Robinson, Harold E. Oyer, Elmer F. Pffieger and Daniel Rosella, xv.

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES: A QUANDARY

The Problem

As stated before, no one to date has ever proven by means of objective data that history has any value in the education of youth.<sup>1</sup> All of our theory has been derived from implications and indirect evidence. This is the first of our problems. Our research needs to be evaluative and constructive instead of exclusively descriptive.

The normal process of social change inevitably gives rise to new demands upon the school. In order to meet these demands, new elements, topics, and areas are introduced and a new emphasis is given to various aspects already in the curriculum. With accelerating social change, due to technology, the past trend of slow change can not continue without grave consequences.<sup>2</sup> Such is our second problem.

The third problem evident is the four human elements related to social studies which are the student, the instructor, the historian, and the public. If one changes without corresponding changes in the others, the integrated aspect of social studies ceases to exist and difficulties arise. As it has been pointed out in a large part they have ceased to integrate.

Let us examine these problems as a microcosm of the total galaxy in the area of study. The public knows who and what history is and where and for what purpose history exists. This public consists of

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<sup>1</sup>Tryson, 76.

<sup>2</sup>Carr, 23.



parents,<sup>1</sup> alumni, law-makers,<sup>2</sup> professionals, businessmen, laborers, patriots, reformers, and ex-students. To them history has value and purpose. It is a nationalistic vitamin with a timed formula consisting of national heroes. It is the repository of national episodes concentrating on national greatness from a wide platform made up of issues, sacred documents, great speeches and immortal doctrines. It is national triumph!

The public appears to view history immutably as a series of great presidents, wise statesmen and successive generations of loyal patriots and fearless warriors.<sup>3</sup> How about the student, the instructor and the historian?

The instructor perceives that he is to teach the public's view and the historian's view as a professional in an unprofessional environment. He is hampered by inadequate salary, operating budget, outdated curriculum scheduling and often he is handicapped by extra curricular duties which are only vaguely associated with an academic education. Further, he is allowed minimal preparation time and, in addition, is expected to keep abreast of the developments in his curricular area.

The sophisticated student looks at this from the viewpoint that the instructor is poorly prepared. Further, he sees him as outdated in his presentation and techniques.<sup>4</sup> He is thus giving information that due to the lapse of time from its acknowledgment to implementation is old "stuff" which is useless or irrelevant.

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<sup>1</sup>Carr, 27.

<sup>2</sup>Carr, 26.

<sup>3</sup>Carr, 25.

<sup>4</sup>Students going to college and teach school return each year to Riley County High School to appraise instructors on their transition. This conclusion emerges from five years of these interviews.



Finally, the historian perceives the transmitted product as adulterated, distilled, and a synthesized distortion of actuality. The product may be out of context and often in the eagerness to make it pedagogically acceptable, unreal, untrue, and little better than useless.

### Conclusion

In summarizing the conclusion is that the major criticisms of the social studies curriculum are:

1. It is repetitious and boring for students.
2. It is poorly articulated.
3. It is not based on the needs of youth.
4. It does not reflect the real needs of society.
5. Its organization ignores principles of learning.
6. It does not provide the integration of knowledge into the social studies.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that if the social studies curriculum has changed little in the last forty years questioning its validity appears in order. There can be no doubt of this upon examination of the social studies content. American government still emphasizes the structure and functions of the national government; civics courses continue to stress national, state and local government and citizenship; history courses are orientated toward a chronological point of view; and geography courses continue to focus on the United States and western Europe.

There is, therefore, an apparent rigidity of the social studies curriculum.<sup>2</sup> This rigidity prevails despite the tremendous changes

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<sup>1</sup> Selakovich, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, et. al., 1-20.

which have taken place in American society and the world since the end of World War I. Unbelievably social studies remains essentially what it was forty years ago.

Teachers are overwhelmed by multifarious facts and bewildering details. The difference between a significant, inclusive generalization and a routine item is never fully comprehended. To complicate such a situation there is an incessant demand to teach content appealingly to all including the gifted as well as the wayward, listless student.

Uniquely there is another problem. Actually, this is a composite of purely pedagogical problems which can be more easily handled than the forementioned ones. What subjects are taught at the various grade levels? Why? What are the essential elements of social studies in high school? Why? Any answers to these problems will still, however, have to be general and tentative - general, because the programs are varied; tentative, because they are likely to be considerably altered in a short time.<sup>1</sup>

Another problem which is rapidly diminishing is the labyrinth of variations in terminology and varying administrative arrangements which make any composite picture of the curriculum only approximately accurate. As teacher education across the country is deeply influenced by those responsible for teacher education from one part of the country to another an amalgam will occur. This will be coupled to the new developing clearing houses of information which will further reinforce the phenomenon.

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<sup>1</sup>Wesley and Wronski, 141.

Still another problem is partly inherent in the nature of social studies itself and the school, coming as it does in the young person's life and his role in life. Even the best-read and best-prepared social studies teacher is faced with the problem of teaching non-functional knowledge in the existing social studies curriculum. Generally speaking, non-functional knowledge in the social studies arises from content without meaning, content which poses no problems, has no particular relevance in today's world, and is often dull and uninteresting for the student. Such irrelevance may come about in spite of the techniques which may be employed in teaching the content. The results appear to leave something to be desired.

Another problem is the simple fact that new courses are not really new. Those mentioned in this report were advocated many years ago but just recently have been again receiving attention.

Another problem is inherent in social studies itself. There are four possible approaches to choose from when considering organization of the learning experiences. There is the chronological or logical, the psychological or counter-chronological, the cycle, and the biographical or individual. How do these compete in our world with the reality of making a living and the technological emphasis of society?

In 1926 Chairman August C. Krey and eight collaborators found the social studies candidly moribund.<sup>1</sup> They recommended a five year study as a vital step toward resuscitation. Possibly such a study by incorporating consideration of the ghetto, rural and urban youth might be again considered. This time one drastic change might be included.

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<sup>1</sup>Peter A. Soderbergh, "Charles A. Beard and the Commission on the Social Studies, 1929-1939: A Reappraisal," Social Education, 31:465-468, October, 1967, 465.

The collaborators should include parents and community leaders as designers, not as observers. True, parents and community leaders who would recognize their inability to evaluate new programs in mathematics or science are likely to consider themselves qualified to criticize changes in social studies, even if their only basis for reaction is a memory of their own study in this field. Still, this would be a critical step forward in the process.

Presently a delusion prevails. This is the delusion of the 1890's that historians knew what history should be taught and at what grade level each course should be given. Today this dominates our thinking with all the vitality of error. School history has an inherent difficulty in that it is a selected, edited content to be learned for preordained purposes such as loyalty, citizenship, patriotism and the like. Thus, to the students social studies appears to be a mixture of narration, description, and implied, if not always expressed, conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

Historians perceive their subject as any of the following or combination of the following:

1. Storehouse of precedents.
2. Glorious record of great men, events and outcomes, examples suitable for imitation (can a ghetto child imitate Washington and his "truthfulness" or the disadvantaged rural youth imitate the Teddy Roosevelt?).
3. Woeful tale of greed, failure, disaster and weakness (should this be left to the impressionable young minds?)
4. A vista dome from which to view and plan (what?).
5. Harmless and sometimes interesting record (often the case!)<sup>2</sup>

Thus historians, themselves, are divided and confused as to the purposes

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<sup>1</sup>Wesley, 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 6.

of their subject along with political scientists, psychologists, and economists. The generations old struggle continues. What should we write and study? Should we write and study the plain unadorned facts or should we select, focus, color, conclude, and recommend?

Teach truth some say. The scientific school led by Stubbs, Maitland, Ranke, and the majority of early American historians tried earnestly to tell the significant facts, believing and hoping that they thereby attained truth.

The influx of federal aid programs and teacher professionalism has apparently heralded a significant change. The conclusions like most conclusions based on professional judgment of a changing phenomenon are not empirically provable or disprovable. One can only believe them valid. This does not mean the conclusion will remain valid for any specific period of time. The validity alters with changes in society.

The early 1960's were years of ferment. One can say that there was an attempt to interpret the social studies more explicitly. We need to spearhead change in interpretation by encouraging experimentation with new ideas, concepts and techniques.

It must never be said of the Social Studies that social studies played a part in:

"...the function of education...(which) has never been to free the mind and spirit of man but to bind them; and to the end that mind and spirit of his children should never escape. Homo sapiens employ pride, ridicule, admonition, accusation, mutilation, and even torture to chain them to the culture pattern. Throughout (the course of history) man has wanted from his children acquiescence not originality. It is natural that this should be so, for where every man is unique there is no society and where there is no society there is no man...it stands to reason that were young people truly creative the culture would fall apart,

for originality, by definition, is different from what is given and what is given is the culture itself. From the endless pathetic "creative hours" of kindergarten to the most obtrusive problem in sociology and anthropology, the function of education is to prevent the truly creative intellect from getting out of hand."<sup>1</sup>

How very little we know about the very large subject we attempt to teach.

"We probably know very well the part we know but how little a part that is of the whole subject of English or American history or whatever curriculum. The difficulty is that we do not teach American history at all; we do not really encourage students to open their eyes to the whole awesome panorama of our history. We are too busy teaching them the little bit we know."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Henry, Culture Against Man, 286.

<sup>2</sup> Don Robinson, "Scraps from a Teachers Notebook," Phi Delta Kappan, 58:416, April, 1967, 416.

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SOCIAL STUDIES DILEMMA

by

S. HERBERT SHAWVER III

B. S., Kansas State University, 1962

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirement for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1968

Millions of American youths will complete social studies requirements this spring as they have for many years past. Faculties will feel uncomfortable that it was not somehow what it should or could have been. A sampling of the students would confirm this. It is impossible to be a social studies teacher and not be aware of this. Is there something wrong with social studies?

The purpose of the report was to give the result of an examination of recent social studies literature and pedagogy. The present status of social studies was then considered. The paper concluded with speculation as to the future of social studies.

What to teach is an old question even in old societies. Changes in culture are reflected in changes in what is taught. The problem of today is the rapidity of change in culture complicating the original problem of what to teach. Schools appear to cling to tradition in face of this rapid change. A priori reason was the basis of tradition originally.

History and social studies defined by Good provided a basis to begin to ponder the dilemma of the social studies. The ambiguous subject matter apparently defies scientific rationale.

The present social studies stem directly from the past. The 1830's saw social studies emerge as a subject with some relapse in the 1860's - 1870's. The 1880's saw social studies again receiving attention as the new high school made its appearance. History and social studies were looked upon as good disciplinarians with moral value. The subject was merely a chronology of events.

Various commissions and committees developed to define and provide a philosophy for social studies. This era closed in 1929. The present program emerged at this point.

The objectives and purposes of history appear to be nationalistic and an effort to treat social ills. Unfortunately these appeared to dominate a vast majority of those engaged in teaching. Few advocated social studies objectives which stressed knowledge as well as abilities and skills along with affective objectives.

Grade placement was by a priori reasoning while methods presented serious problems. A maze developed in methods with many well worn terms, many, having double meanings. Methods became simple and mechanical with little or no imagination. Many authors mentioned this but none developed a solution. Students naturally resisted such. Some suggested methods were given such as the problems method using the study manual, concentric, cycle or spiral method and the biographical method. Organizing social studies for teaching purposes apparently had not passed out of the hypothetical stage.

The future of social studies lies in extensive curriculum revision. Trends indicated we were moving away from a a priori "values." Some choice was evident. One prominent trend was discerned and that was curriculum enlargement. Absence of a national school system made any headway in this area difficult. Some studies may stimulate further changes leading to some progress. Another trend was that the moribund condition appeared to be diminishing. Still, only studies were responsible for the most part rather than grass roots development. A final apparent trend was the tendency to develop new tools for acquiring data.

The key is definitely extensive research based upon present cultural needs and conditions. Technological innovations and their impact on pedagogical techniques need consideration.

The problem was restated. Social studies are not subject to validity on basis of a priori reasoning and must receive a new basis. Secondly, we must see the new demands upon the school in their proper perspective. We must examine the faces of social studies and bring them together in objectives, purposes, and methods.

In conclusion, social studies has not changed and are too rigid with instructors overwhelmed with multifarious facts and bewildering details. We need to restructure the subject and consider the students and their roles in life. Serious thought must be given to new courses not renaming old ones. Federal aid may produce the change.